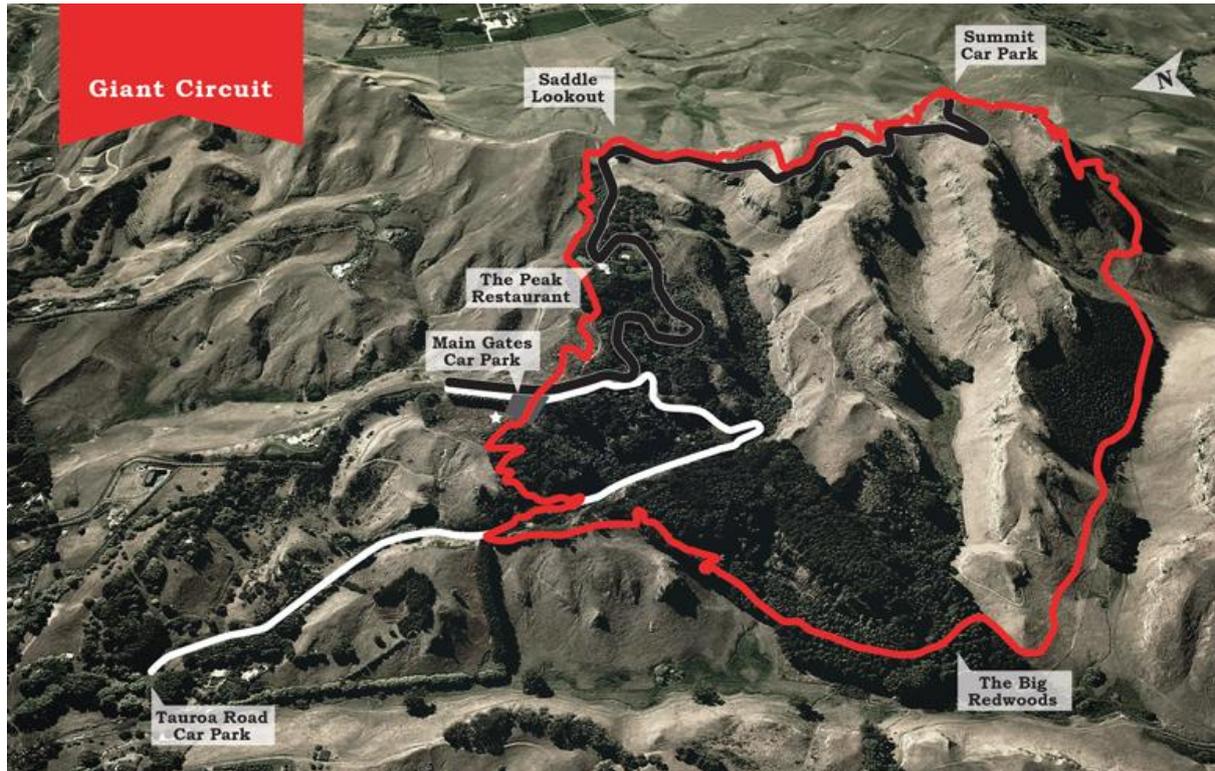


## Giant Circuit

5.4km / Est 2 hrs 15 mins

Best walked anti-clockwise, the Giant Circuit takes walkers around the perimeter of the Park and up to the summit via the southern face, offering a great sustained workout and several new areas of track including the challenging 'Snakes & Ladders'. Steep sections, care needed.



## Kawakawa



Kawakawa (*Macropiper excelsum*) is a small tree which is found throughout the north island and upper south island of New Zealand and is common in all the bush areas of Te Mata Park. Also known as the pepper tree, kawakawa leaves are often covered with insect holes which are mainly caused by the kawakawa looper moth caterpillar. Kawakawa was one of the most important healing herbs used by Māori and is still widely used today. A tea can be made from the leaves or roots and used for bladder and stomach and indigestion problems and to relieve pain. The leaves are used to heal cuts, bruises and nettle stings. Related to black pepper, Kawakawa seeds can also be used as a cooking spice. Kawakawa are prolific and vigorous growers and can create such a dense canopy that other plants are suppressed. Some kawakawa are removed to prevent this happening in the Park.

## Big Redwoods

This grove of 223 stunning California redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) was planted in 1927 and many are now over 40 metres tall. The Chambers family were great experimenters with tree planting and, having generally favoured eucalypts, decided to try a conifer species.

Noting the similarities between the climates of Hawke's Bay and coastal California, they decided to plant a large grove of redwoods.

Native to America, the redwood is an evergreen and extremely long-lived tree with a life span of 2,500 to 3,500 years. They are the tallest trees now living on earth - the record-holder is the Hyperion tree in Northern California which

measures 115.61 metres (379.3 feet). Redwoods have a conical crown with horizontal branches. Their bark is very thick – up to 30cm – and quite soft and fibrous, with a bright red-brown colour when freshly cut which is where the name redwood comes from. The leaves tend to lie in a flat plane to maximise their ability to capture sunlight. The Big Redwoods is one of the most popular places in Te Mata Park and has been the setting for weddings, concerts and even Shakespearean plays.



## Ongaonga



Ongaonga (*Urtica ferox*) is a nettle that is found only in New Zealand. Sometimes known as the tree nettle, Ongaonga has woody stems and unusually large stinging spines, and can grow to 5 metres tall, making it the world's largest nettle. Even the lightest touch can result in a painful sting that lasts several days. The hollow needle-like spines, which are found on the leaves and stems of the plant are filled with a neurotoxin which causes a rash, irritation, pain and sometimes even damage to the nervous system. There has only been one recorded human death from contact—a lightly clad hunter who died five hours after walking through a dense patch. Ongaonga has a huge role to play in the recovery of native butterflies as it is the preferred food plant for larvae of the New Zealand red admiral butterfly or

kahukura. They also use it as a relatively safe home, rolling up the tree-nettle leaves into 'tents' where they are protected from potential predators.

## Saddle Lookout

The Saddle Lookout offers beautiful views east over the Tukituki River and out to the ocean. The Tukituki has its beginnings in the Ruahine Ranges and flows 117km to the Pacific Ocean at the southern end of Hawke's Bay. It passes through Waipukurau in Central Hawke's Bay before flowing towards Hastings and Havelock North where it is divided by the craggy range of hills that includes Te Mata Peak. According to Maori legend two taniwha lived in a lake at the upper basin of the river.

They fought for possession of a young boy who had accidentally fallen into the lake. The struggles of the two taniwha split the river into the Waipawa and Tukituki Rivers and drained the lake. Tukituki means "to demolish" and it is thought that this refers to the destruction of the lake.



## The Giant's Bite



From this vantage point looking east you can see the 'bite' associated with the legend of Te Mata. From the Heretaunga Plains, the hill can be seen as the prostrate body of the chief Rongokako, the grandfather of Kahungunu and ancestor of all iwi of Ngāti Kahungunu. The legend tells how Te Mata o Rongokako, leader of the coastal Waimarama tribes, had set out to make war against the Heretaunga peoples but instead was lured by Hinerakau, the beautiful daughter of a Pakipaki chief. Hinerakau set Rongokako many impossible tasks, the last of which was to bite his way through the hills between the coast and the plains so that people could come and go with greater ease. Te Mata died proving his

love, choking on the last mouthful of the earth of Te Mata Park and today his work can be seen in the hills as what is known as The Gap or Pari Karangaranga (echoing cliffs). The outline of his fallen body seen from the Heretaunga Plains includes Te Mata Peak, also known as The Sleeping Giant.

## Snakes & Ladders

This one kilometre section of walking track that runs between the Big Redwoods and the summit was created in 2013 by the Park's caretaker, Shaun Gilbert. Unlike Te Mata who was defeated by the impossible task set him by Hinerakau in the legend of Te Mata Peak, Shaun was not daunted by the distance and very steep sections and has succeeded in creating access to a stunning area of the Park. He has formed this entire section of track by hand with just the help of a pick and shovel.



## The Summit



Rising to 399m at its summit, Te Mata Peak is a 'Hog's Back' ridge of erosion-resistant limestone dropping steeply to the east. These sedimentary rocks, originally deposited in horizontal layers on the seabed, have been tilted and bowed upward by the geological forces of the Pacific and Australian tectonic plates. The Park lies on the edge of dramatic uplifted limestone hill country, cut through by the Tukituki River. From the summit, with its spectacular views, a series of scarps, spurs and valleys drop away. You can see massive rock cliffs and outcrops, studded with fossils of marine shells, while bush

remnants and wetlands remain nestled in the valleys. These cliffs and valleys of the Park are classic limestone features built from the remains of billions of sea creatures that lived and died near the coast between 2 and 3 million years ago.